Labour Market

NOTES ■ February 2014

Alberta labour market starts 2014 on a positive note

Alberta

- Alberta posts job gains to start 2014. Alberta gained 6,600 in January after losing 9,700 in December. The gains were concentrated in the private sector (+18,500) while self-employment (-14,800) declined. The public sector added 2,900 jobs in January.
- Gains were in full-time employment. The 9,800 full-time jobs created in January more than offset a 2,800 drop in part-time positions.
- Year-over-year job growth was strong. Since January 2013, Alberta has gained 69,600 jobs, the highest growth rate among the provinces at 3.2%.
- Unemployment rate drops. Alberta's unemployment rate declined by 0.2 percentage points to 4.6% in January, the lowest rate since October and the second lowest in the country after Saskatchewan.
- Service sector jobs jump; goods producing industries slip. The service sector gained 14,400 jobs in January, more than offsetting a 7,800 pullback in goods sector positions. At the more detailed industry level, retail and wholesale trade led the gains (11,200), followed by professional, scientific and technical services (9,600). Notable job losses occurred in the forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas industry (-7,900).
- Weekly earnings growth continues. Average weekly earnings increased to $1,131 in November, up 0.4% from October and a gain of 3.7% over the same month last year.

Canada

- Canada adds jobs. Employment increased by 29,400 in January, reversing part of December's 44,000 decline. The largest gains in employment occurred in accommodation and food services (17,000) and the health care and social assistance (16,900) industries. Over the past 12 months, job growth has been modest, with only 145,900 (+0.8%) jobs added.
- Unemployment rate moves down. The number of unemployed in Canada fell in January, as a result of jobs created and people leaving the labour force. This pushed the Canadian unemployment rate down 0.2 percentage points to 7.0% in January.
- Earnings inch up. Canadian average weekly earnings were $928 in November, a slight increase over October and 2.5% higher than the same month last year.

For definitions of the data indicators discussed in this publication, please see the second page of August 2012's Labour Market Notes

Employment Growth by Province, Jan. 2014 vs. Jan. 2013

Source: Statistics Canada

Alberta Labour Market Indicators

Indicator	October or Latest*
Employment	2,243,300
month-over-month change	6,600
year-over-year % change	3.2%
Alberta Unemployment Rate (UR)	4.8%
Edmonton UR**	5.5%
Calgary UR**	4.7%
Participation Rate	72.9%
Average Weekly Earnings (AWE)	$1,131.40
year-over-year % change	3.6%
Average Hourly Wage	$28.21
year-over-year % change	1.3%
Job Vacancy Rate**	2.5%

Source: Statistics Canada

* All data is from the Labour Force Survey for January except AWE, which is from the November Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours (SEPH), and the job vacancy rate from October.

** This indicator is calculated as a three-month moving average and is not seasonally adjusted.

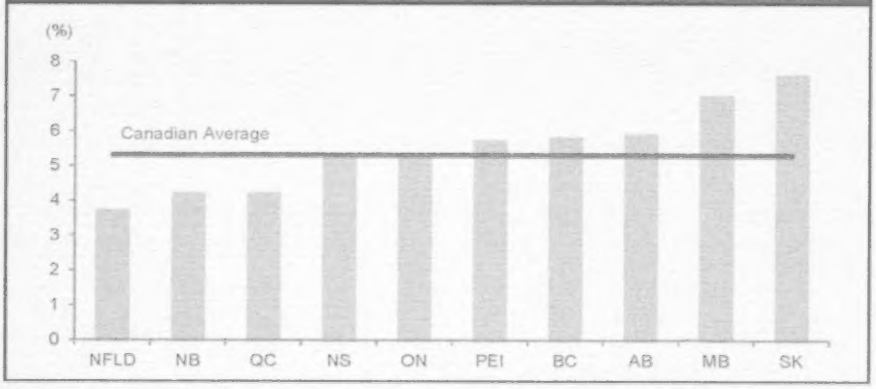
Many Albertans holding down more than one job

The most anticipated and widely reported indicators from the Labour Force Survey are the number of jobs created and the unemployment rate. Both indicators are used to gauge the strength of the labour market. But there are other important variables contained in the survey that shine a light on the state of the labour market that deserve some attention as well. One variable that helps paint a clearer picture of how labour is supplied is the number of multiple job holders.

The role of multiple job holders in the labour market

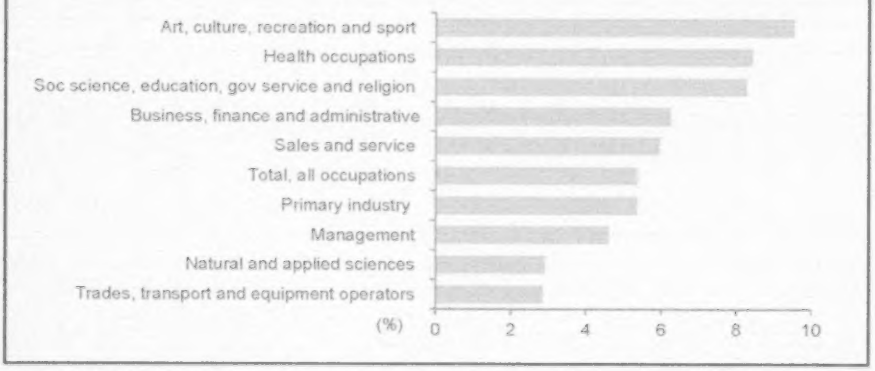
Only looking at indicators that focus on the employment status of workers, such as whether an individual is employed or not, can underestimate the total amount of work supplied by workers. For instance, a multiple job holder will show up in the survey as one employee, but may work more hours than is being conveyed by that status. In addition, while employment statistics tell us how many people work, data on multiple job holders tell us more about how people work.

Chart 1: Multiple job holders as percent of workers by province*



Source: Statistics Canada;
* 2009 to 2013 average

Chart 2: Multiple job holders as percentage of work force by occupation, Alberta



Source: Statistics Canada

How many multiple job holders are there?

The share of the Alberta workforce with multiple jobs has fluctuated between 5.4% and 6.3% of the labour force over the past decade, representing an average of about 120,000 individuals. In 2013, the share was 5.4%, accounting for 118,700 people.

Multiple job holders are more common in Western Canada (Chart 1). In general provinces with low unemployment rates tend to have a higher share of multiple job holders, perhaps indicating that a stronger labour market affords people the opportunity to hold a second job. The highest prevalence of multiple job holders was in Saskatchewan, at 7.6% in 2013, while Newfoundland had the lowest at 3.7%.

Characteristics of multiple job holders

Occupations with the high prevalence of multiple job holders are in the service sector, where part-time work is also more likely (Chart 2). The occupation with the highest number of workers holding down at least two jobs is the service and sales occupation, while the occupation with the highest percentage of multiple job holders is the art, culture, recreation and sport. Females are more likely to be multiple job holders, at 7.4% versus 4.6% for males. There is no obvious age profile of a multiple job holder in Alberta. Individuals aged between 15 and 24 are just as likely as those aged 25 to 44 to hold multiple jobs.

Conclusion

Information on multiple job holders sheds light on how Albertans are working. The vast majority of Albertans hold a single job, but the share of multiple job holders is typically higher in Alberta than the national average.

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